

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending, and claims 10-18 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Applicants have cancelled withdrawn claims 10-18.

I. Elimination of improper multiple dependency

Upon reviewing claims 1-9, Applicants noticed that claims 6-9 are multiple dependent claims that depend upon multiple dependent claims 3, 5, 6, 7, and/or 8. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claims 6-9 to eliminate the improper multiple dependency.

II. Newly added claims

In order to maintain the same scope of claim coverage in light of the amendments to claims 6-9, Applicants have added dependent claims 19 and 20 (which correspond to claim 6 and which depend upon claims 3 and 5, respectively), claims 21-23 (which correspond to claim 7 and which depend upon claims 3, 5, and 6, respectively), claims 24-27 (which correspond to claim 8 and which depend upon claims 3 and 5-7, respectively), and claims 28-32 (which correspond to claim 9 and which depend upon claims 3 and 5-8, respectively).

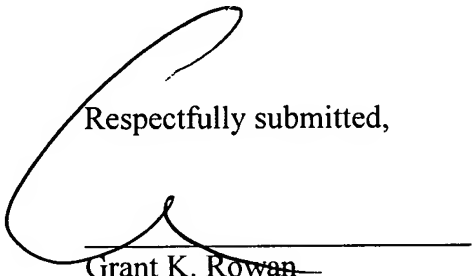
Clearly, these new claims are added to maintain the original scope of the multiple dependent claims. As such, the amendments relate to formal matters and do not constitute prosecution on the merits.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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